



## Changing Lives One Child at a Time

June 2006

**“There is no more obvious test of our moral fiber as a society than how we treat our most vulnerable children.”**

*— King County Executive Ron Sims*

**For all of you who pass that test every day, we say thank you.**

### Thank You Caregivers of Washington’s Children

Foster Care Month was observed by Children’s Administration staff and community partners throughout Washington. There were dozens of events around the state, including dinners, barbecues and luncheons, to honor foster parents and others who provide daily care to children who are not able to live with their parents.

Governor Christine Gregoire wrote a proclamation for the month stating that “6,000 foster families in Washington State open their homes and hearts to children in crisis, playing a vital role to help children and families heal and reconnect and helping launch children into successful adulthood.”

Casey Family Programs coordinated Saturday events at the Space Needle for foster parents, foster children and youth, and the community. Information on what the community can do to support foster care and educational options for youth were among the many resources available during the events. In addition, the Administrators of the Space Needle provided free passes for foster parents and caregivers to ride the elevator to the top and view the City and watch the boats sail by. YMCA’s across the state provided free swim passes during the month for foster parents, caregivers and their children to enjoy a dip in the pool during family swim times.

On May 15th at the Capitol Building in Olympia, foster parents and caregivers were recognized for providing care, hope and dreams to the children in their care. State Supreme Court Justice Bobbe Bridge gave the keynote address, honoring foster parents from across the state including: Jim and Lori Bilbruck of Deer Park, Nina Ammons of Ellensburg, Julie Kerr of Bellingham, Connie Kiyonaga of Maple Valley, Sue Armstrong of Puyallup and Vera Kite of Longview.

The event was highlighted by speeches from two individuals who have been through foster care and are grateful for what foster parents gave to them.

“I am the result of your hard work, and I thank you,” said Joshua Roberts of Lacey, who lived in more than 50 homes during his foster care experience. Joshua is a registered nurse, foster parent, and is currently manager of several car service businesses opening in the Olympia area.

Tony Shellman, adopted out of foster care at age 2 by a couple in Seattle, went on to become co-founder and partner in ENYCE, a clothing line recently bought by Liz Claiborne. Tony and much of the audience was brought to tears as he talked about his experience.

Larry Sanders, an 18-year-old living with Steve and Daniele Baxter in Olympia, closed the ceremony with a moving rendition of “I Can Fly.” Singing unaccompanied, his voice filled the Columbia Room of the Capitol Building.

### Changing Your Name

If you have married and/or changed your name, make sure to change your name on your Social Security card. You can run into problems with the state’s background clearance check and possibly even foster care payment issues if your legal name on the card does not match the name Children’s Administration has for you in the foster care system.

To avoid difficulties, your name must be consistent in all the paperwork.

## Confidentiality of Foster Parent Information

Children's Administration does not release your name or address to the Foster Parent Association of Washington State (FPWS), local foster parent associations, YMCA of Greater Seattle or to Families for Kids (FFK). These agencies can provide support, information and referral, and key information to assist you in providing for the children in your care. We encourage you to contact each of these agencies and provide them with your information so that they can add you to their email and mailing list and you can then receive important information. Contact information for these agencies is:

Foster Parent Association of Washington State: [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org) or 1-800-391-CARE (2273)

Families for Kids (FFK): [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) or 1-888-794-1794

YMCA of Greater Seattle: [whyfoster@seattlemca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattlemca.org) or 1-800-760-5340

Foster Care Resource Network (Bremerton and Tacoma caregivers): 1-253-677-8122

## Important Numbers

### **Important numbers to know when you take care of children in foster care or are thinking about doing so:**

Statewide information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent: *Why Foster* statewide telephone line at 1-800-760-5340 or [whyfoster@seattlemca.org](mailto:whyfoster@seattlemca.org) Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Statewide information about receiving foster parent support: *Families for Kids*: 1-888-794-1794 or [www.familiesforkids.org](http://www.familiesforkids.org) Monday- Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message. Receive a return call by the next business day.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: *Foster Care Resource Network*, 1-253-677-8122. Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

General foster parent information for the state of Washington/FPAWS: *Foster Parent Association of Washington State*, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org). FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: *Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team* (FIRST) 1-253-219-6782, Monday – Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

CA Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis Line and general support on licensing and case management questions not abuse or neglect: *Caregiver Support/Crisis Line*: 1-800-301-1868. Weeknights from 4:30 p.m. – 8:00 a.m./weekends and holidays, 24 hours per day.

*Family Help Line*: 1-800-932-HOPE or [www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org). The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington State. Last year, the Family Help Line received over 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

### **Children's Administration Foster Parent Website and Foster Parent Training Website**

For information about Foster Parenting: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

For information about Foster Parent Training: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve:(r) <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1>